

# Reflection on Lent

The Rev'd. Dr. John Roddam | [www.Pleroma.ca](http://www.Pleroma.ca)

As a child, it was drummed into my head (and heart) that Lent was a Penitential Season. Penitential, eh? Why, I thought, did we use such big words in Church that are never used elsewhere and that no one inside or outside the Church understands! Some interesting things were trotted out each year. It would have been helpful to have things like the Lenten Disciplines explained.

## Lent



Much later I learned that one of the ancient streams of the Anglican Tradition (The Sarum Rite) did not use the purple hangings common then and now in the Roman Catholic Church... and most Anglican Churches! The Sarum Tradition had an 'array' - a simple unbleached flaxen altar frontal with applique symbols that were used to describe the Passion of Our Lord – the spear, the nails, etc. A significant part of the Anglican Way is to teach the Faith. The Sarum Tradition was committed to this.

The most vivid memory of my childhood about Lent was that we gave up candy and sweets as some kind of "holy duty." I never quite understood why! I only discovered later that there are almost a dozen types of fasts described in the Bible. The 40-Day Lenten Fast was to prepare believers to move in the power of God. During Holy Week, those preparing for Baptism at the Easter Vigil went through rigorous prayers with exorcism and deliverance. Having been involved in deliverance ministry, I recognize how important the discipline of fasting can be! How far from simply "giving up candy..." Frankly, I think the real stuff of casting out demons would have captured the imagination of a Grade 5 or 6 boy more! My... how we have sanitized our beliefs!

BTW, for those of you that are skeptical regarding simple (deliverance) and formal exorcism, you may be surprised to know that EVERY diocese in the Church of England has an exorcist! This is due to the rise of occult, new age, and alternative spiritualities in the UK. We are not far behind...



The Lenten Disciplines – prayer, Bible study, fasting, almsgiving, etc. are all ways for a Christian to draw closer to God. A great site on the Internet is "Lent and Beyond" (<https://anglicanprayer.wordpress.com>) This website was founded in 2004 with the purpose of "encouraging and providing resources to those who are committed to praying for the Episcopal Church, the Anglican Church of Canada & the Anglican Communion."

Lent is a time of preparation – preparing our hearts for a fresh and deeper walk with the Lord. This article comes to you as Lent is beginning. You may not have begun a Lenten focus. May I suggest that this lent you explore a new way of engaging the Lord? Why not start with reading one verse daily from the Gospels? Ponder its meaning for your life! Better yet, read a bit from the end of one of the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) every day through Easter. The way to a deeper and more fulfilling walk with God begins (and continues!) with your next step!

May you enjoy a Holy Lent!